

Most tick treatments don't repel ticks but kill them once they start to feed. You should still check for ticks and remove them even if they are dead.

# Do the tick check!

## Humans

Ticks prefer warm, moist, dark areas of the body.

Check the whole body. It may be helpful to have someone else inspect areas that are hard to see, or if you are alone use a mirror.

Preferred areas include:

**Hidden:** belly button, around or in the ear, hairline and scalp.

**Parts that bend:** back of knee, elbow, between fingers and toes, underarms.

**Pressure points where clothing presses against skin:** underwear elastic, belts, collar.

## Animals

Ticks often choose folds of skin or crevices, so examine your pet as thoroughly as possible. Brush against, as well as with, the hair-growth to part it so that any ticks may be seen. Check around and inside the ears, around the eyes and the muzzle, as well as between pads and toes. Unfed sub-adult ticks can often look like scabs or moles so pay attention to such areas.

Horses and ponies which are turned out can be vulnerable, and stabled animals may pick up ticks during a ride. It's a good idea to perform a tick check when untacking. Search areas such as under the mane, inside the ears and nostrils, around the chestnuts, the dock of the tail and on genitalia.

Available from:

**"When you're outside in the mild weather, protect yourself and your family from tick bites and reduce your risk of Lyme disease (Borreliosis) by following these top tips".**

Courtesy of outdoor survival expert, Ray Mears.



## Ray's Top Tick Survival Tips

- 1. Know where to expect ticks.** Many areas in the UK with good ground cover and diverse wildlife (such as squirrels, hedgehogs, birds and deer) can pose a potential risk as wildlife feeds any ticks and allows their population to increase. Animals also transport ticks to new areas.
- 2. Use a repellent,** reading the instructions carefully. There is currently no vaccine to defend against Lyme disease so prevention is key.
- 3. Carry a tick remover.** By having a tick remover (and antiseptic wipes) with you, any attached ticks can be removed sooner, lessening the chance of disease transmission.
- 4. Tuck your trouser legs into your socks.** This helps to deter ticks from crawling inside your trouser legs, down into shoes and through most socks. Wearing gaiters will also help to prevent this. Light-coloured clothing makes it easier to see ticks on the garment.
- 5. Take a walking stick with you.** Where you can't keep to the centre of paths to avoid ticks on overhanging vegetation, you can use a stick to tap the vegetation ahead of you, knocking off any waiting ticks.
- 6. Check your body carefully for ticks after being outdoors,** taking special care to check all over the body.
- 7. Don't bring ticks home.** Check clothing and pets for ticks to avoid bringing them inside.
- 8. Carefully remove ticks.** Use a specialist tick-removal tool.
- 9. Be a 'Tick Buddy'.** You can help your companions by checking for ticks in places they can't see, such as the back of the head and behind their ears.
- 10. Protect your pets.** Talk to your vet about tick treatments.

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 **Tick Twister**<sup>®</sup>  
by O'TOM<sup>®</sup>

# Be tick aware!

## What are ticks?

Ticks are parasites, meaning they feed on the blood of a host (animal or human.) They are usually found in long grass, leaf litter and on low plants where they wait for a host. Ticks don't jump or fly. In a split second they climb on as the host brushes past, then look for a safe place to feed.

Special mouth parts and saliva allow the tick to fix itself securely into the skin, where it feeds for a number of days

Most people only notice a tick on their pet once it has fed for several days; when it's fat with blood and protrudes through the pet's hair. By this time it can be as large as a coffee bean and vary in colour from pale pink or blue-grey to dark red or purple. Before feeding, ticks are flat, generally sesame-seed shaped and vary in size from 0.5mm up to about 3mm.

## Where do ticks live?

There are usually more ticks in woodland and forest areas, but they can also be found in fields and parkland, especially where there is livestock and deer. However, ticks can also be present in town parks and gardens.

Ticks are more abundant in late spring to early summer, and again during autumn. However, they can be active all year round during milder weather (above 3.5°C).

# The Tick Twister®

Not every tick carries infective organisms and not every bite will transmit disease. However, the longer an infected tick is allowed to feed, the more likely it is that an infection will result.

## About ticks

Ticks are second only to mosquitoes for carrying disease to humans. Changes in farming practices and the climate mean that there are more ticks in our countryside and urban areas.

Ticks feed on the blood of their host (animal or human) and can attach themselves anywhere on the body.

Special mouth parts and saliva allow the tick to fix itself securely into the skin, where it feeds for a number of days.

Ticks can carry a variety of infective organisms which occur naturally in wild animals. The tick ingests these organisms when feeding and passes them on to the next host.

## Removing a tick

How a tick is removed is extremely important. Incorrect removal can result in:

- The tick's mouth parts being left behind in the skin.
- Compression of the tick's body.
- Puncture of the tick's body.
- Injury and irritation to the tick.

### Why is this a problem?

Leaving behind the tick's mouth parts may result in a localised infection, which in severe cases can lead to abscesses and even septicaemia.

Compressing the tick's body may cause fluids (its saliva and gut contents) to be squeezed back into the bloodstream of its host (the person or animal it's attached to). These fluids may contain disease-causing organisms.

Puncturing the body of the tick may spill infective fluids (full of disease-causing organisms) on to the host, or on to the person removing the tick.

Causing injury or irritation to the tick may result in it regurgitating (vomiting) infective fluids into the host, potentially causing a serious infection.

The Tick Twister® is favoured by professionals (veterinary, medical, forestry and field workers etc), as well as by members of the general public.

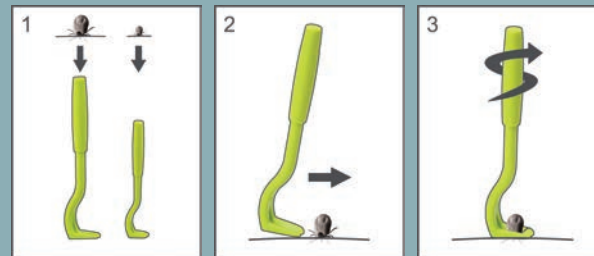
In a comparison study of four different tick-removal devices, published in the Veterinary Record (2006, 159, 526-529),

the Tick Twister® was compared with surgical forceps, a pen-tweezer device, and a tempered steel tool (slit and traction action). The Tick Twister® proved to be significantly better than the other devices for the time required to remove the tick, the ease with which the tick was grabbed, the force needed to extract the tick, the reaction of the animal, and the condition of the tick's mouth parts.

### Why is it safe to twist with this tool?

Whatever the method of tick removal, the tick's barbed mouth parts are so microscopic and delicate there is a chance they can break off. However, using a best-practice method will reduce this risk.

The Tick Twister® cradles the body of the tick and doesn't exert pressure to either its mouth parts or its abdomen. It can therefore be safely twisted in one direction (either clockwise or counter-clockwise – the tick is not screw-threaded), which allows the barbs on the tick's proboscis to be freed from the surrounding tissue. The twisting action also helps to crack the special saliva cement that most hard-tick species secrete to fix themselves in. Because the tool doesn't cause any compression to the body of the tick, it minimises the risk of back-flow of the tick's saliva and gut contents, and therefore helps to avoid disease transmission.



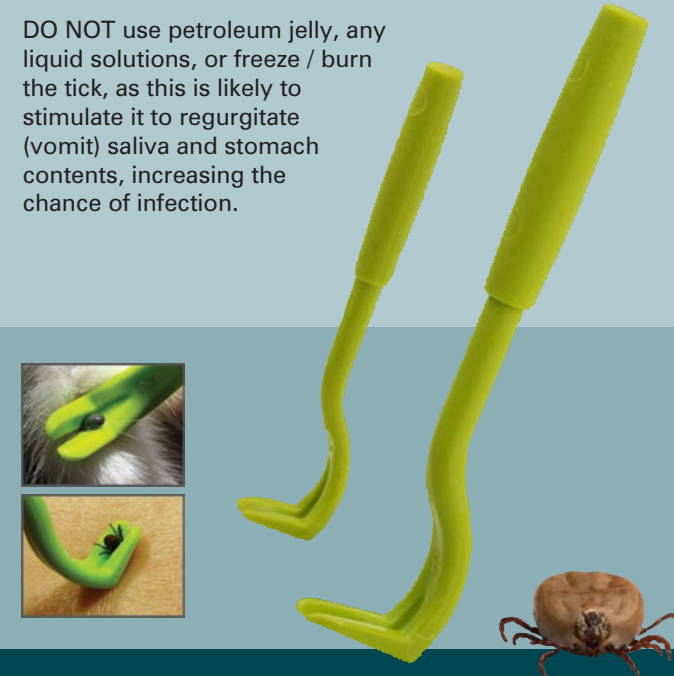
The Tick Twister® is suitable for the removal of ticks from both humans and animals and can be disinfected with normal disinfectants or sterilised in an autoclave at 284°F (140°C), so is reusable. The product is made from recyclable plastic, which can also be incinerated without pollution (no chlorine fumes during combustion).

You may want to save the tick for identification in case the person or animal the tick was attached to becomes ill within several weeks. To save the tick, write the date of the bite in pencil on a piece of paper and put it with the tick in a sealed plastic bag and store it in a freezer. Your doctor/vet can then identify that a tick bite has occurred and use this information to assist in making an accurate diagnosis.

If you don't want to keep the tick, the best way to dispose of it is to place it in a tissue and squash it. Then flush the tissue down the toilet or dispose of it in a dustbin. This will prevent the tick from going on to bite another person or animal.

Although not every tick carries disease, immediate removal of an attached tick is recommended.

DO NOT use petroleum jelly, any liquid solutions, or freeze / burn the tick, as this is likely to stimulate it to regurgitate (vomit) saliva and stomach contents, increasing the chance of infection.



For more tips on tick-bite prevention and tick control, contact your Chemist, Veterinary Practice or visit [www.ticktwister.co.uk](http://www.ticktwister.co.uk)

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